

An Independent Newspaper of Democratic Principles, but not Controlled by any Set of Politicians or Manipulators Devoted to Collecting and Publishing all the News of the Day in the most Interesting Shape and with the greatest possible Promptness, Accuracy and Impartiality; and to the Promotion of Democratic Ideas and Policy in the affairs of Government, Society and Industry.

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Address, THE SUN, New York City.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1884.

Announcements To-Day.

Brown Opera House, 14th St., N.Y.

Chichester Hall, Lecture Room.

Comedy Theatre, 44th Street, N.Y.

Drury Lane Theatre, 20th Street, N.Y.

Edith Theatre, 20th Street, N.Y.

Grand Opera House, 3rd Avenue, N.Y.

Metropolitan Opera House, 3rd Avenue, N.Y.

Madame's Music Room, 14th St., N.Y.

Madison Square Theatre, 4th Avenue, N.Y.

Metropolitan Opera House, 3rd Avenue, N.Y.

People's Theatre, 20th Street, N.Y.

Star Theatre, 20th Street, N.Y.

Theatre Comique, 20th Street, N.Y.

Theatre Francaise, 20th Street, N.Y.

Whitney's Theatre, 20th Street, N.Y.

Wyndham's Theatre, 20th Street, N.Y.

York Street Theatre, 20th Street, N.Y.

Advertisements for THE WEEKLY SUN, issued to-morrow morning, must be handed in this evening before six o'clock.

What We Say to Not Owning Ships.

The London *Times* prints, in a report of the proceedings at the recent annual meeting of the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company, the following remarks of the Chairman:

"As to the condition of trade, they were perfectly satisfied that shipping had been greatly improved during the year. He had pointed out to the Committee the remarkable increase of the enormous tonnage which had been going on for the last four or five years, and that there was no doubt that the shipping would continue to increase. For the moment, however, he believed there was no room for expansion. He could assure the Committee that the shipping of the world had increased so rapidly that it was difficult to find employment for ships, and he had been informed by some of his shipping friends on the east coast of England where business cargo-carrying boats were more economical than ships, and that they had increased in number and size, and that their clearances were greater than ever before. They had to return because at the present time they could not pay. He might mention that these vessels had been chartering steamer to carry coal out to India from Cardiff to Liverpool, which was about as bad as not save that the wages were less than those of the barges used on the London Docks to transport the coal."

This will be no news to anybody familiar with the shipping business, but it is worth while to bear it in mind when we are asked to view the decay of American shipping as an unmitigated calamity. We do not, it is true, enjoy the satisfaction of disputing the supremacy of the ocean with foreign countries, but we also do not have to pay the price which the luxury is costing them and the world as if we indulged in it.

The Nicaragua Annexation Scheme.

We are not surprised that the promoters of the Nicaragua treaty have been anxious to prevent the disclosure of their project before it should be ratified by the Senate in secret session. If the account of the main features of this extraordinary scheme be correct—and its correctness will be inferred from the silence of the State Department—our people have reason to be thankful that they cannot be plunged in complications of the most gravity without their free consent, deliberately given in the full knowledge of the risks and burdens that would devolve upon them.

The primary and fundamental fact which our people are now called upon to look squarely in the face is that this Nicaraguan project, like the San Domingo job, is an annexation scheme. The Nicaraguan Government, it seems to us, in order to perpetuate the United States' right of eminent domain over a strip of land six miles wide, running from ocean to ocean, and including the intervening waterways, together with the terminal seaports of Greytown on the Atlantic and Brito on the Pacific coast. Now, why should we disavow, at this time, our sage and persistent repugnance to outlying territorial acquisitions, which are certain to be the pretexts for heavy and incessant drags upon the national treasury on the plea of protective as well as constructive necessities, yet which, in the event of war with a naval power stronger than ourselves, would by their very situation be incapable of use or defence? Is it because the ribbon of territory now offered to us would permit us to construct, at a cost still undetermined, but certainly immense, a canal which so long as we are at peace with France and England would be entirely superfluous, and which in time of war would be inevitably shut to American commerce as the rival waterway? No candid man can doubt that the Panama Canal, whatever may be the obstacles to its speedy completion, will be ready for service within, or about, as soon as, the suggested route through Nicaragua could be opened. And suppose the former channel should be five or even ten years longer in excavating than is now expected, of what moment would be such delay compared with the imminent, bold and tremendous responsibilities imposed upon the nation by a hopeless struggle to defend a remote dependency?

It was because they hoped to hide from the people of this country the startling and endless responsibilities involved, that the promoters of this annexation project have tried to hold back from the real parties in interest the details of their plan. They knew that when the treaty had been published it would be impossible to pull the public with vague and florid proclamations of patriotic aims, for it would at once be evident to men of common sense that the millions it is proposed to lavish, with professed eyes to the contingency of a naval war, on the protection of a ditch in Nicaragua, had better be expended here home, in preparing the great commercial port of New York, for instance, to resist a hostile armament. For it will be noted that, under the provisions of this annexation scheme, the sum required for building the canal, which of itself is huge enough, being variously estimated at fifty, a hundred, and a hundred and forty million dollars, is but the beginning of the threatened drain upon our treasury.

Having dug the canal, we must shield it against military and naval assaults. It follows that a considerable garrison must be perpetually kept there, and that the terminal harbors must be provided with fortifications of magnitude and strength sufficient to withstand bombardment by British or French ironclads. But does any one suppose that the House of Representatives, which stands in whose own awe of its constituents, can be trapped into voting a dollar for torts at Greytown while the great city of New York is left in its present defences? Assume, even, that by squandering a hundred millions we might turn San Juan de Nicaragua into an American Gibraltar, how would that profit American commerce if the armored fleet of a European enemy should anchor in our lower bay and train its guns on Wall street?

On the signs of suspicious relationship between the proposed canal and the Mexican concession proposed under the Robinson regime and on the prospect of being embroiled by the treaty in a serious dispute with Great Britain at a time when we are unable to cope with that country on the ocean or to save our exports from destruction, we may comment at another time. But for the moment we would dwell with emphasis on this decisive fact—that though we could be sure that every dollar of the funds appropriated would be honestly spent, and that England would cheerfully release us from any obligations incurred by the Clayton-Brown treaty, it would be a piece of reckless extravagance and folly to sanction the annexation of territory in Nicaragua. For we repeat that in peace times a waterway constructed there would be superfluous, while in the event of war it would be at once burdensome and useless. If we have millions to spare for constructive and protective purposes, let us, when we have an honest Government, apply them first to lift our navy at least to the level of a third-rate power, and to place our great commercial cities in a state of self-defence. Then there will be time enough to enter on the manifest destiny programme and to invite by annexation schemes and the ruffage of treaties the contingency of war.

Not So Bad As He Makes Out.

The Rev. Dr. Chasny, it seems, is very gloomy over the moral condition of New York at the present time. "I never in my life saw the affairs of the city in so deplorable a state and corrupt a condition as now," he said last week to a reporter of THE SUN.

The reverend gentleman had been speaking of certain chromo-lithographs which have come into vogue of late as advertising cards, and which are offensive both to the moral and to the aesthetic sense, and he flounced off into the generalization we quote. He regarded those flashy pictures as only a symptom of the prevalent degradation of the city, both in government and in society.

A similar rivalry appears now to exist between the different Republican factions.

Mr. Groton C. Gorman, one of the best-known Republicans in the country, has lately written a letter in which he says in substance that the Republicanism of Mr. Blaine's supporters is not Republicanism at all. "In the Reps., the Blues, the Hailstones, the Blaines, and the like," he writes, "are still to be found in the wilderness, while the unknowns, are like and valiant." The prophet is all dead.

A Little Unpleasantness.

An enterprising restaurant keeper, in order to attract customers, displayed in front of his premises a sign bearing the words: "Rock Farms soup."

Not to be outdone in entering for the public a rival restaurant keeper across the way put out a placard inscribed with this legend: "Rock Farms soup."

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